

4 September 1981
MLD-1035

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, FBIS

FROM: Acting Chief, London Bureau

THROUGH: Chief, Operations Group

SUBJECT: Monthly Report -- London Bureau -- August 1981

I. GENERAL

- A. The new high speed circuit [] came on line on 2 September after months of delay. After modifications have been made to our Transtel equipment and tests completed, in about one week, high speed transmissions will begin.
- B. An increasingly strong dollar has delighted our budgeteers and theater-goers, but it has also caused a gradual reduction in the COL allowance from 35 percent to 5 percent over the past several months.
- C. Despite the semi-permanent Polish crisis, the August file was the lowest for three years. August is the traditional holiday month in Europe, East and West, and political activity is usually minimal.

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II. OPERATIONS

A. Editorial/Monitorial

1. London played a key role in reporting some of August's most dramatic events. The downing of Al-Qadhdhafi's SU-22s in the Gulf of Sidra sparked an open watch on Libyan media and enhanced monitoring of other pertinent transmitters by Caversham and EAU, with Nicosia assisting by covering Tripoli Domestic's early morning mediumwave broadcasts, which are unheard here. The bureau's initial filing included the first Arab mention of the incident from Kuwait radio and Libya's official statement, the latter clearing almost an hour ahead of REUTER reporting. The bureau scooped AFP by 50 minutes in reporting a Lisbon radio announcement that Prime Minister Balsemao had decided to submit his resignation. AFP led on the explosion in the Iranian prime minister's office and on the deaths of the prime minister and president, but a vigilant

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Persian monitor had come in early and caught what appeared to be Tehran's first mention at 0330 GMT. An open watch on the radio and rapid primary source reportage ensued. Primary and secondary sources were tapped for information on the incursion of South African forces into Angola; Johannesburg, Luanda and Lisbon radios and ANGOP all provided unique material.

2. As usual, the Polish situation generated much copy throughout the month. The major effort came on the 11th and 12th when a second line to Vienna was established and an overnight Polish shift was laid on to handle a 14-hour PZPR Central Committee plenum. Several long speeches and numerous reports on the proceedings were processed. The Barcikowski speech was highlighted in a message from the American Embassy in Moscow, which requested London to provide text. Our 9-take version was refiled to the Embassy at immediate precedence.

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4. The transmitter problems that have been plaguing PARS casts most of the year seem to have been finally resolved early in the month. Reception has been mostly good. Details have been reported to FCS.
5. PMU has been interviewing and testing Russian/French and Russian/Polish applicants to fill a vacancy. Several promising applicants are under consideration.

B. Cologne Unit

1. With the Bundestag still in recess, the traditional holiday month of August was relatively quiet in the FRG. There was, however, copious reaction to President Reagan's decision to begin production of the neutron bomb. The unit filed liberally on this subject from press commentaries and leader statements.

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2. On the 13th, a militant appeal and parade was held in East Berlin on the 20th anniversary of the Berlin wall. When it was determined that the event was to be relayed live by East Berlin Television, [] arrangements for a special feed from West Berlin of the broadcast and was able to cover the audio portion live, including a 17-minute speech by SED leader Erich Honecker.
3. The necessary crystal and instructions for converting the new TV monitor to German broadcasting standards were received from Hong Kong via London Bureau. [] technicians will convert the set with assistance from the local Sony representative.

III. ADMINISTRATION

- A. PMU Russian monitor trainee [] resigned on 21 August to pursue an advanced degree in theater arts.
- B. Associate Editor [] departed on 25 August for an extended TDY in Abidjan to fill in for editorial leaves.

IV. VISITS

To the bureau: [] Safety Officer, on 11 August;
[] Finance Officer, EPS, 26-29 August;
[] Personnel Officer, Admin. Staff, 28 August.

From the bureau: [] Admin. Officer, to RAMC, Paris, 24-25 August.



Attachments

cc: Chief, Austrian Bureau
Chief, Cologne Unit